

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION,

THE  
**Fraternal**  
and REMEMBRANCER

ORGAN OF THE  
BAPTIST MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP

New Series.

JULY, 1941.

No. 43

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# The Fraternal

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## BUNYAN—THE PREACHER'S PREACHER.

THERE are many books a preacher *may* read, for the range of choice is as wide as literature itself, secular and sacred, but there are some books he *ought* to read, no one of which should be far from his elbow. Let each man satisfy his own soul as to what these are to be. My task is to commend one to my brethren in the ministry, as a *sine qua non* to effective preaching. This is not an easy task, and it would be harder were it not for the fact that there are a few books over which Time admits that its destructive influences have no power. Of these one is Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. This classic needs no commendation of mine, for to know it once is to love it for ever, and a memory built out of its pages becomes a perennial challenge to any preacher-man. If, however, it needed a pointing finger to single out its worth to the modern ministry, I think I would be content to suggest these three reasons: Matter, Author, and Style.

*Matter*: No less a writer than Robert Louis Stevenson maintained that on every page the book is stamped with energy of vision and a like energy of belief. There is the spirit of a fighter in it and a tenderness in striking contrast. The vigour is both startling and strange considering the theme, but with a naturalness all its own, with accordant humanity and charm.

In this book you are never away from life, for every page is alive. What a galaxy of characters is here for the vital preacher to meet and later interpret, to the widening and deepening of his own life and preaching in consequence. How direct is all the experience! How modern! The challenge, too, is almost unescapable. For we and our congregations are all these men, and we *dree* or win our destiny as did they. Just to mention a few of the most well-known instances: There are Christian and Evangelist, Standfast, Fearing, Hopeful, Talkative, Worldly Wiseman, Facing-Both-Ways, Byends, Simple, Sloth, Presumption, and Ignorance. They are made to live out their lives before us, and again and again we see our own lives mirrored in their experiences, either of doom or deliverance. As we read, the light becomes more winsome, the darkness more fearsome. Bunyan makes us feel how terrible a thing it is to *fall out* of the



hands of God. How beautifully simple and appealing conversion is sketched: "Dost see yonder shining light? Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

The end is in keeping with that desperate beginning—"A glory that excelleth." Here is seen the abiding worth of all that long and bitter fighting to keep honour and faith alive in a world where all too often these are discounted. At the end Christian and Hopeful find they can still take courage, "and the enemy after that was as still as a stone, until they were gone over." And what a reward! "Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate; and lo, as they entered they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. . . . Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy; and it was said unto them, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"

But Bunyan was too true to the revelation he had received to suggest that this was the only possible end, for had he felt so it is hard to believe he would have been the evangelist, tireless and constrained that he was.

We have to note that he had known "the terror of the Lord." With heart-sorrow he has to point out that there was (among others, many worse) one Ignorance, ferried over the chilly stream by Vain-Hope. Arriving, Ignorance knocked impatiently on the gate. It was opened, but when they asked him for his certificate to present it to the King, he fumbled in his bosom, but found none. "Have you none?" In the ensuing silence the Two Shining Ones who had conducted Christian and Hopeful to the City had to go out and bind him hand and foot and have him away. "Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction." Here is Bunyan's "Great Divide," from the sense of which he was never casually free, and it bound him to his task of preaching as a man bound to a responsibility more solemn than word can sketch or picture depict. It made and maintained him an Evangelist to the last. Then his going Home was good.

*Author:* The new life began potentially for him when, standing within the shadows of his own soul, he heard a few women talking of a faith that had brought sunshine into their experience, and made them members of the kingdom of

light and love and life. To his darkened mind these sat, as it were, in heavenly places, with the glory and freedom inherent in that other dimension. The contrast with his own life was appalling. At length, however, that sunshine dawned for him, the radiance of which light up even his darkest pages.

Not with presumption did he become a minister, but served a good apprenticeship. All his experience moulded mind and spirit, granting him a courage and clarity second to none. When the call came, it came to a craftsman whom the Spirit of God had instructed in the fit use of tool and material. That he put "first things first" is historic. Following upon his arrest for preaching, himself being unlicensed in the thought of the day, and being warned that to do so again he would incur the penalty "You must stretch by the neck for it," he replied: "If I was out of prison to-day I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God."

That simple, unostentatious courage and experimental preaching, grounded in historic revelation, won a widening way. When Dr. Owen was asked by King Charles II. how a man of his education could sit under a preaching tinker, he replied: "May it please your Majesty, I would give all my learning in exchange for the tinker's abilities."

Severe of mien though he must often have been, there was not wanting an unsophisticated humanism. He loved all simple, beautiful things; the world was frequently the vestibule of God for him, hill and moor and cosy nook. As we know, his heart was almost broken for his blind daughter. He could romp with children, as well as plead with rebellious human nature to be reconciled to God.

Again, his wit, as sharp as a sword-blade though never harmful, darts all over his pages. What about Mr. Ready-to-halt? If humour be the ability to see the incongruous, how much there is even in this name. Then there is Miss Much-Afraid, a blend of a twinkle and a tear, for, let us remember, the finest humour is never far off the hurt of the soul. Bunyan's humour was chivalrous.

He was, therefore, as much removed from cynicism as from the City of Destruction. How complex in character—husband, father, comrade, lover, patriot, citizen, as well as pastor. He gave to each the homage of a rich and faithful nature, and with such a man gallant humour was as natural as breathing.



We do well, therefore, to keep company with this man until, like him, we receive the summons of the King. Very possibly we shall preach better, live better, and end better, the more we make Bunyan our contemporary as confessor, evangelist, and fellow-pilgrim.

*Style*: "He was a wonder in simple, direct, and beautiful English." No mean verdict this. Added to a marvellous gift of disciplined allegory, he brought to his task a clarity of thought, and simplicity of diction, and earnestness of spirit rarely known in so perfect a blend. Johnson wished he had read *The Pilgrim's Progress* earlier. Macaulay's criticism bears on its simple artistry. The mind and heart of Coleridge waked at its reading. The doubt-troubled Arnold found solace in its pages, and he re-read the Bible under its kindly guidance.

Here, then, is one whom we might take as exemplar in our task as preachers. It is true that "poeta non fit," and few may attain to such an earnest simplicity, yet at least we can aim at it. We, too, can put ourselves at his severe, kindly school, kneel where he knelt, listen as he listened, then go out and obey as did he. We also can study the Bible he so deeply loved, and with more servants to wait on us in such exercise than he ever dreamed of. As he, we can sacrifice our magnificent polysyllables for that simplicity that reaches the soul unhindered by preacherly selfishness. Ever seeking the deepening of experience, we ought to be able to tell "what the Lord has done for our soul."

There is a price to pay, nevertheless, as is fit, since for diamonds one must always pay in excess of pebbles. "In my preaching," said Bunyan, "I have really been in pain, and have, as it were, travailed to bring forth children to God. If I were fruitless, it mattered not who commended me; but if I were fruitful, I cared not who did condemn." So he, too, knew the unsearchable riches of Christ. His reward had not to wait until he had crossed the River. "My heart," he confesses, "hath been so wrapped up in the glory of this excellent work that I counted myself more blessed and honoured of God by this, than if He made me the emperor of the Christian world, or the lord of all the glory of the earth without it."

It was fitting, therefore, that on the Bedford pedestal erected to his honour he is depicted as the minister so nobly and vividly presented in his book: "Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hung up against the wall: and this was the fashion



of it; it had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head."

FRED CAWLEY.

## STATE SCHOOLS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

IT is a somewhat grievous thing to remember how the British people have been goaded by the tragedy of war to a new interest in education. Why do we neglect so vital a matter as education until a crisis stabs us into action? The present War, unlike all others, has opened doors and windows into Britain's homes, and the nation has been startled by revolting personal and family habits, by dirty houses, dirty clothing, dirty heads and hair, by the ignorance, incompetence, and irresponsibility of parents who have brought children into the world and neither fed nor clothed nor washed them. It would seem that dirt and shocking habits have so alarmed certain people that we are in peril of a ramp and racket type of legislation. Paganism, so often associated with moral and physical dirt, is an ancient bogey, and paganism has been marked down as Enemy No. 1 in Britain. We know that paganism may wear a clean school tie, or an elementary school scarf, or may have nothing round its neck at all, but it has been asserted that paganism, clean or dirty, is due to the lack of religious education in the schools.

Some years ago there were huge slum clearances and the dirt and ignorance were there all the time, but no one raised the cry of paganism. When the Bill to raise the school-leaving age was passed in 1936, the motive with many politicians was economic and neither moral nor truly educational. Votes were given with an eye on the labour market rather than on the emancipation of the inner life of the children. There is no more wretched indictment of modern Labour leaders than their record in regard to the education of working-class children. The fact is, educational interests in this country have often been vested interests, lacking any deep concern for the growth of the personality of the child as a future citizen of Britain. To turn the eye to the light, as Plato used to say, is the true kind of education, and blessed are the children who know the happiness of such enlightenment. But the children of Britain have been victimised so often by half-baked politicians, ecclesiastics, and hard-headed employers of child labour that any one who knows the story will give the

closest attention to the recent demand for a new policy of religious education. That such attention is necessary is affirmed by a recent weekly organ of the teaching profession which has warned its readers against Churchmen who know how to turn a national emergency to their own advantage.

I regret the tendency to throw blame for our domestic ills on the teaching profession and the schools. Let us remember the teachers are Civil servants and not servants of the Churches. They will co-operate with us on a voluntary basis and we shall secure better results by remembering this fact. I have no space to argue this principle, or tell the history of the educational struggle around this principle during a century. I am writing much more fully elsewhere and will put down here an argument which is worthy of the notice of Free Churchmen: an argument which is weighing considerably with the Anglicans in their present attitude; and argument which vindicates the Free Church position on religious education in State schools for more than a century. It looks as though the wheel were coming full circle.

The Act of 1902 was a false step for a Protestant nation to take. During the controversy Free Churchmen affirmed that the Romanist schools would reap the full results of the Act. And this has happened. Since 1902 the Established Church has lost over 1,300,000 scholars. Many Anglicans are to-day judging the Dual System as an educational blunder and a barrier to the co-operation of Christian men in the task of religious training in the schools. At long last the struggle is being decided inside the Church schools. The priest thought he could continue to direct education to his special ends, but there are forces in his own schools which are disintegrating his authority. Large State grants have not enabled the Church to keep her buildings in order, and many are unsuitable for present educational work. But there are more serious internal problems forcing the issue against the Dual System.

Dr. Braley, Principal of the Church Training College, Durham, in his recent book, has pointed out that the teachers in Church schools are often conscious of their inferior status as compared with the teachers in Council schools; that few teachers will accept appointments in Church schools if they can secure a place on the staff of a Council school. The students who are trained in the Church colleges evade Church schools for Council schools. The teachers resent the interference of the clergy in



the schools, and they are reluctant to teach the Catechism, knowing that to cram a child's memory with dogmatic statements which he cannot understand is contrary to all sound psychological methods.

In view of these and other problems, Dr. Braley urges the end of the Dual System; he would offer Church schools to the State on condition—(1) that religion is an integral part of the school syllabus; (2) that it shall be taught and inspected by trained teachers and State officials. If the Church consented the old controversies would be at an end. And we believe, as we have always pleaded, that Agreed Syllabuses make our co-operation possible.

At the same time, we need to be watchful. This is evident from letters to *The Times* by men who still resist Biblical teaching and demand sectarian instruction. I am afraid an attempt will be made to gain the right of entry into Council schools and use the Anson Bye-law to withdraw children for sectarian instruction. The Anglicans have been sounding Free Church ministers with a view to securing permission for clergy and ministers to give religious instruction in the Council schools. I hope we won't do this. We shall soon have hopeless muddle.

We must not identify any sort of religious instruction with true education. The demand for religious training is not always discerning. "Something must be done quickly to turn the tide of paganism," so the argument runs; it usually comes from people in a hurry who assume that all sorts of education have equal value.

Let us aim at adequately trained teachers by demanding that Scripture be an optional subject in the Teachers' Certificate Examination. This would mean lecture courses in all teachers' training colleges on the subject. I would include in the syllabus Old and New Testament Introduction and Contents, also an elementary course in Biblical Ethical Ideals. As Psychology has been applied to child education, I believe Ethics should so be adapted. Children should be taught the values of character, truth, honour, unselfishness, honest industry, and how to treat human nature in themselves and in others as an end and never as a means. Such a course would be a far better training for citizenship than an educational system which has been used to make success the aim of schooling and of life.

HENRY TOWNSEND.

## BETHEL.

Rugged and grey it stands beside the road :  
 There is no beauty in its frowning stones,  
 Nor any riches that the world may prize,  
 Nor any air of dominance uncrowned  
 That can lead captive our submissive minds.  
 Not these—  
 Another spirit broods about this place.

Goodness and love and faith did fashion here ;  
 These walls were raised by patient labouring  
 Of simple souls in whom was godly fear  
 Solid and steadfast as the builder's faith ;  
 Three sister windows, plump, clear-eyed, serene,  
 The grey, uneven roof, the chimney stack,  
 The weather-beaten door of studded oak,  
 The hollowed threshold stones so patient worn,  
 The little mossy path, the stunted trees  
 That stand like gospel sentinels around  
 For heralding :—  
 These all have known the sacred loving care  
 Of humble folk in generations gone.  
 How infinitely dear their Lord to them,  
 How prized their faith above the things of time—  
 The futile, fading things that strewed their days—  
 How great to them the hope, how dear to Him,  
 To raise unto His Name a House of Prayer  
 By faithfulness adorned and not by gold.

Plain, simple folk, unlettered labouring souls—  
 Here,  
 In this quiet place,  
 I grapple with your spirit through the years ;  
 I watch you through the rolling mists of time  
 Wending your solemn ways to yonder porch  
 To hear again the story of the love  
 That sent Christ down to die for sinful men.  
 And, lifting reverent eyes, above the door  
 I read the ancient stone undimmed by time  
 Where-on you crowned your labour with your praise. . . .  
 . . . . "Bethel."  
 And then the year, "Sixteen and seventy-four,"  
 Great-hearted folk, I lift a reverent heart  
 And know you worthy to be honoured.  
 Fashioned from out the quarries of strong faith,  
 Moulded by God's incomparable grace,  
 Established in the Kingdom of His Son  
 Here—  
 In this timeless place,  
 They gathered in their simple homely way,  
 Nor felt it crude nor out of place to give  
 The homespun, artless worship of their days  
 To Him Who built the earth and spread the skies ;  
 Their songs, oft harsh and graceless, were the praise  
 Of bluff adoring souls that groped along



Uncultured, roughened ways with thankfulness;  
Their prayers, the bursting converse of their hearts  
Stormed eagerly the battlements of heaven  
Regardless of fine words or polished phrase,  
Knowing the Lord who looks upon the heart  
Can measure faith's sincerity the while;  
Their preaching, vast and massive like the hills  
That tell their ageless message to the plains,  
Coming in eager tones insistently  
With dreadful power that could not be denied.

Pretenceless, unadorned, they gathered here;  
And as they came a glory grew and grew  
And stamped the Christ-light on each open face.

These were the men who knew, who understood,  
Who prized the fleeting hour but as the lark  
Prizes the stunted bush in which he sings,  
Knowing it but a shadowed resting place  
In which to pause, then on to happier things.  
Here gained they strength for weary pilgrimage,  
Refreshed they here that inner life divine  
With water from the blessed wells of God.  
Here learnt the way of prayer, and learning, knew  
His present help in every time of need.  
Here sought forgiveness, here had sins forgiven;  
Here with new hope and purpose first set out  
With steadfast face upon Christ's pilgrim way;  
Here entered the blest family of God. . . .  
And as a sunbeam glorifies the space  
In which it glows, tho' poor and dusty clad,  
So did God's wondrous grace enlighten them.  
Here surely sought undying faith to live,  
And living faith to die.

Here,  
In this hallowed place,  
They grew to know God's will, to hear His call,  
To look with new eyes on their stranger earth,  
To view it with a spiritual gaze  
This wide domain of eager crowding men,—  
This restless host that God would claim through them.  
These poor, unshining walls unceasingly  
Resounded to their eager conquering plans,  
And hearts that Christ had won burned ardently  
To lead more sinners to the Saviour's feet,  
To gain more soldiers for the Master's cause,  
To fill the whole wide earth with Jesu's praise.  
Here sounded out the triumph of the Cross,  
Here paused its warriors before the fight,  
Here came the glowing tidings of the day—  
Of victories won, and sometimes bitter loss.

Yea, and here too, e'en in this lowly place  
Where never prince nor prelate deigned to come,

Where learning paused and riches felt ashamed,  
 And simple folk held godliness to be  
 The crowning treasure of the fleeting years;  
 Here,  
 Neath this quiet hill,  
 This village chapel—  
 Men learnt to see, to think, to act, to rule;  
 To set each separate tract of earth beneath  
 The all-prevailing sovereignty of God  
 To stand erect upon the truth they knew  
 And fearless front the world let come what may;  
 Strong in the strength of great convictions held,  
 Grand in the dignity of godly ways.  
 Here democratic governance uprose,  
 Went forth, and shaped the common weal;  
 Here burned the nonconformist mind, the zeal  
 For nobler fashioning in freedom's ways.  
 Many a mighty movement like a flood  
 Has swept victorious o'er men's hearts for God  
 And touched the world with healing and with peace,  
 That had its rise, forgotten, ages past,  
 In this grey village Bethel unadorned.  
 Many an honoured servant of the State,  
 Many a leader of great enterprise,  
 Many a seer, the herald voice of God,  
 Was cradled in this quiet hallowed place.

Here God made great the common sons of time,  
 Unknown of men but greatly loved of God,  
 Saints of the plough, the forge, the mart, the home,  
 Salt of the earth and burgesses of heaven.

And shall I, passing, hasten on with scorn  
 Because it looks so grey and plain and worn?  
 Shall such a cloudy mind as I despise  
 With careless shallow eyes what God hath wrought?  
 Dear Lord, forbid this barren heresy. . . .  
 Here,  
 In this sacred place—  
 Here where I pause and gaze across the years  
 To greet with mem'ries praise and stirring breast  
 The faithful souls who, Christly, laboured here,  
 To watch the flowing pageant of their quest  
 For the Eternal City of their God. . . .  
 Here,  
 Even here,—  
 Where now it stands, rugged and grey and old,  
 Pretenceless, unadorned, beside the road;  
 Here,  
 In this pulsing hour—  
 Make me to know that such a place as here  
 Makes God more lovely and brings Heaven near.

ERNEST W. BACON.



## PROBLEMS OF OUR POLITY.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE PASTORAL SESSION.

Any healthy development within our denomination must conform to certain details, with which I cannot deal, but must set forth in a form that may seem dogmatic.

## 1.

WE must aim at expressing our fellowship in financial terms, involving a closer approximation to equality of stipends. Here the Presbyterian system probably affords the best available guidance. Our stipends are determined by the commonly accepted commercial principle. The wealthier congregations claim the leadership of those whom they consider our best men. Their judgment is not always infallible. Their *standard* is not always Christian, nor even sensible. There are congregations, however, that would be the better for the help of our ablest preachers, our wisest pastors, but by reason of their poverty are denied it. There are congregations that would be the better for a touch of fustian in the pulpit, but by reason of their wealth are able to avoid it. It is not the most Christian, nor the most effective, method of utilising the gifts God has been pleased to distribute amongst us.

## 2.

We must aim at retaining our elasticity and resilience according to changing conditions. It is an element in our denominational tradition, and one that we should be at pains to preserve. The "Fellowship" movement is the latest illustration of our power of adaptation, and a development deserving of careful and sympathetic study. It would be a blunder, nevertheless, to suggest that a fellowship of a particular pattern should be established in every district. The denomination is in debt to Doncaster and Lincolnshire. We have much to learn from those who have been experimenting in these districts, but we should remember that what succeeds in Doncaster might fail in Cardiff. Bloomsbury might have good reason to reject what is admirably adapted to the needs of Lincolnshire. There are neighbouring Baptist churches in certain towns that differ radically in tone and doctrine. It is the glory of our denomination that it can find room for both of them. Granted that each would be the stronger for closer contact, the fact remains that a form of association splendidly suited to the needs of one district

might fail disastrously in another. In seeking to avoid an independency that has often been selfish, we must not run into a totalitarianism that might prove mechanical and repressive. Our problem is the problem of the modern world, the reconciliation of liberty and order, freedom and justice, a desperately difficult problem, the solution to which is not in sight. The Polity Commission, which is grappling with this problem on our behalf, is entitled to our sympathy and gratitude.

## 3.

We must aim at maintaining those elements in our traditional polity that in the past have enriched not only our denomination but our common Christian life. It is doubtful whether we have much to learn from Connexionalism of the Methodist type. It has its testimony to bear, its work to do. Our testimony and work are of equal value. Judged by what is surely the final test, that of spiritual vitality and evangelical passion, Methodist churches are not perhaps inferior, but neither are they superior to our own. Nor have they been conspicuously more successful in winning the ear of the British people. It is significant that their largest congregations are found in their Central Halls, where their policy is in harmony with our own, a particular individual filling the pulpit regularly and remaining for a long period. By that policy our Churches were built up. They were created and maintained by Ministers who combined preaching and pastoral activity in a happy reciprocity, and were content to remain for many years in a particular sphere. They attained an assured insight into the needs of their congregations, and a delicacy of touch in dealing with them that could not have been acquired otherwise. That kind of pastoral relation informing preaching, that kind of preaching inspired by pastoral activity, is supremely valuable. We must not let that go. The idea still is: One man one church; one church one man. We cannot put a stipendiary Minister in every church; but why not employ pastors who earn their living as Paul, as Carey, as many a Baptist pioneer was compelled to do? Our lay preachers already render splendid service. They would render better if they were better trained and better thought of. In every area they should have their own training college. Our neglect of adult theological education is a reproach to us. If the W.E.A. can establish colleges and run courses for manual workers, why should not we offer similar facilities to those willing to enter the Ministry of the Church whilst continuing to earn their bread in



the world? Then, when they have reached a prescribed standard, why should they not be ordained to the pastorate, and given similar standing to the stipendiaries, if indeed there be any standing beyond that which belongs to honest and faithful service? There is a wealth of material talent among our young folk that, largely through lack of training and the conservatism that builds Sunday Schools and stops at that, never dreaming of adult educational centres, is being allowed to run to waste. It is an aspect of our problem of which the Polity Commission should take notice.

## 4.

We must remember that our gravest problems cannot be solved by any merely mechanical change. They are not peculiar to any polity nor to any denominational type. They are common to Christian people. It is not a reorganised Church that we chiefly need, but a revived Church, speaking with the authority born of conviction to the condition of this age. That means a theology which has gripped mind and heart, by which we live, for which if needs be we are willing to die. Our fathers had it. They had their authority, the written word, interpreted by the spirit stirring the hearts of converted men. They had their aim, to pluck brands from the burning to which they were doomed if they failed to repent. In certain respects we find the theology of Puritanism unacceptable. Have we found a satisfactory substitute? Rather, have we discovered how to put the faith expressed in that traditional theology into terms that the modern mind can apprehend—not necessarily accept, but apprehend—that are clearly relevant to the problems of this revolutionary age? That, above all, is what we have to do. It is not enough to preach our own experience. Our experience is limited, narrow, needing to be corrected and amplified by an authority independent of our moods and our waywardness. Are we clear what our authority, what our aim, is?

The story of the Early Church, so dear to Baptist hearts, is wonderfully instructive. "And being assembled together with them, He charged them—to wait." It was not with organization that they began, not with evangelism. They began by waiting, continuing steadfastly in prayer, until at last the Light broke, and warmth, and power, and they were ready confidently and boldly to challenge a hostile world. The process of formulating a policy in harmony with our denominational genius,

enabling our denomination to play a part worthy of its great past in leading a wayward world back to God, may seem slow, hampered by many a selfish interest, many an irrational prejudice. It is as we think and pray together, honestly facing our perplexity, our sin, that the Light will break, flooding troubled mind and tired heart with new energy, revealing the solution to our problems, sending us forth fired with new passion to plead with men and peoples to be reconciled to God—swept onwards by the tides of the Spirit.

A mighty wave of thought and joy,  
Lifting Mankind again.

H. INGLI JAMES.

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### READING FOR THE PULPIT.

I RECALL two recent conversations, one with a layman, the other with a minister. The layman regretted the dearth of solid instruction in his minister's preaching, and hinted plainly that it was due to a lack of systematic study. This man, college trained, and now in his second church, was busy in many good works, but not busy at his books. Less of the former busy-ness and more of the latter would substantially enrich his ministry, making his preaching edifying in the strict meaning of that word. In the second conversation, a minister was speaking about one of our younger men, who left his college a few years ago, and has done creditably in his first charge. "The pity of it is," said the minister, "he has no background."

I pass on these judgments for what they are worth. I have no means of checking their validity, but they certainly deserve our consideration. More than that, they challenge us all to self-examination, lest *our* ministry be found blameworthy.

The ministerial office involves many obligations and activities (especially in such days as these) which may be granted a real legitimacy, but an unyielding primacy must always be given to the preaching of the Gospel. Our primary call is to be preachers and interpreters of the Word of the Living God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord, and entrusted to the stewardship of the Christian Church, within which we are accredited ministers. It is our high calling to be preachers in a sense much fuller and more exacting than that of an exhorter, testifying to what Christ means to him. We are called to make

known, authoritatively and officially, the greater Christ of the Church of the centuries.

Viewing the Christian ministry in this light, our first inclination will be to hold back, over-awed by the consciousness of utter inadequacy. This work may be for other men, but it is not for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it. But—we have heard a Voice, and we are given a Commission which we cannot refuse without sinning greatly.

Men of this high vocation will certainly seek the best possible training before embarking upon it. Allowing for exceptional cases, because God fulfils Himself in various ways, and He calls all sorts of men from all classes of society, a strong case can be made out for the wider practice of a prolonged cultural discipline in University and Theological College as the pre-requisite of ordination. The more thorough the education, the greater the likelihood of an efficient ministry, with the lengthening years adding to, not subtracting from, its efficiency. The combined insistence of a high vocation and an awakened mind, attuned to habits of study, will guarantee a wise and productive use of time and opportunity.

The relations between true religion and sound learning are of such historic importance that no minister can ignore them without self-condemnation. The Christian ministry is not a profession in the conventional sense; but it is, nevertheless, a "learned profession," in the sense that its duties demand knowledge of a sort that is "professional" and obtainable only by a serious application to specified studies. Professionalism, always reprehensible, is both hateful and disastrous in a Christian minister, but we must also beware of amateurism. Ignorance and partial knowledge can do an immense amount of harm. If our people are to become "experts in good," they require expert guidance. If the Church is to "save the world," her ministers must know the relevance of Christianity to the needs of the world. Truly the Ministry is a "learned profession."

"Attend to your Scripture-reading, your preaching, and your teaching," wrote St. Paul to Timothy. These words of the apostle establish both the primary importance of our preaching ministry and the necessity of regular preparation for its exercise. "Christianity," says Bishop Hensley Henson, "started, not with a book, but with a preaching." It was preaching of a dual character, one promoting the enlargement of the Church,



and the other conducing to its edification. We owe our clearer awareness of these two types to the scholarly expositions of Professor Dodd in his book "The Apostolic Preaching." There was, he says: (1) the preaching that was proclamation of the facts and events of God's action in Jesus Christ; and (2) the preaching that was exposition or teaching of the ideals of the Christian life, which this action of God inspired.

Our concern, as ministers in the settled pastorate, is chiefly with preaching of the second type. The two types, of course, though demonstrably distinct, are inseparably related.

We require a proper balance in our reading for the pulpit. There are those whose weekly reading seems to be almost wholly determined by what they conceive to be the needs of their sermon preparation. Choosing their texts, say, on Sunday or Monday, they spend the rest of their time in looking up a variety of books, for the purpose of gathering material for their sermons of the following Sunday.

This method is open to serious objection. Taken at its best, the reading that it induces is scrappy and opportunist, if not positively narrow, and the sermons which it produces, whatever their superficial merits, will lack the stamp of the preacher's deeper individuality. Furthermore, it is not calculated to promote either a steady increase in true preaching power or the preacher's ability to sustain a long ministry in one sphere. Preaching power transcends, even while it uses, sermon construction, and we must not assume that we know how long our Lord wills us to stay in a given sphere. We must think of our preaching in terms of the years as well as of the following Sunday, and must make our reading subserve the fulfilment of these high demands.

The regulative principle, surely, is that our reading shall determine our preaching, and the underlying assumption is that the scope of our reading shall be so generously conceived that, if faithfully followed, it will ensure a steady increase in the quality of our preaching.

It is beyond my purpose to outline a detailed course of study, but I venture to make a few observations.

I earnestly hope that young ministers, fresh from their colleges, will resolve to continue their studies on the lines with which they have become familiar, subject to the proviso that they also give opportunity to the subjects which they find most congenial.

I recommend non-collegiate ministers to send for the curriculum of one of our theological colleges, and then to work their way through it.

Every minister should build up a good library—the larger the better, provided that it is select. We require certain standard works of scholarship, covering the main departments of theology and kindred studies, and there are great classics of literature and devotion which yield their precious treasures only to those who own them. There is cultural value in their very presence on our shelves. I suggest that there are inexhaustible riches in:—*Augustine's Confessions*, Bishop Andrewes' *Private Devotions*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding*, Law's *Serious Call*, Wesley's *Journal*—and *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, *The Oxford Book of English Prose*, and *The Oxford Book of Christian Verse*.

The Christian preacher should know the general history of the Church, but he will find it profitable to devote special attention to such epochs as: The Apostolic Age, the Arian Controversy (no mere barren logomachy, but of vital importance to the continuance of Christianity), the Reformation, the 18th Century Evangelical Revival, the Tractarian Movement, the modern Missionary Movement. There is great value in the history of our own country, and we should be familiar with both the history of the Church of England and the rise and development of Protestant Nonconformity. It goes without saying that Baptist ministers should know the history of their own denomination.

It will quicken our sense of high vocation and enlarge our conception of the ministerial office if we steep ourselves in the history of preaching. What an impressive and soul-stirring Roll is that of the Ambassadors of God. And how mightily hath God wrought through their preaching. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, aye, and for ever." Our preaching will acquire something of the universal and the eternal.

I conclude with three quotations:—

"The man we are proud to send forth from our Schools will be remarkable less for something he can take out of his wallet and exhibit for knowledge, than for *being* something, and that something recognisable for a man of unmistakable intellectual breeding, whose trained judgment we can trust to choose the better and reject the worse." (Quiller-Couch.)

"His theological education is beneficial in proportion as it enlarges and clarifies his preaching mind, and preserves for its use precious material which might otherwise have remained unavailable." (S. Parkes Cadman.)

"For Christe's lore and his apostles twelve  
He taughte—and first he folwede it himselve." (Chaucer.)

E. W. PRICE EVANS.

### REFLECTIONS ON YEARS SPENT IN COLLEGE.

AS I review College life and the subjects taught, I feel no desire to see radical changes in the curriculum. I do not think it makes for an educated ministry that theological students should possess "little Latin and less Greek," and the theology of the Church Fathers is less ephemeral than the notions of modern psychologists. It is untrue that we speedily forget all we were taught in the classroom, and still more untrue that the lectures in N.T.I. Church History and Philosophy contribute nothing to our ministry. Most students enter College untrained in the ways of study and the discipline of logical thinking. They have been in a workshop or office, where men do not dwell on things unseen and eternal, do not cultivate the reflective attitude, nor learn to follow an argument. The normal College course certainly trains a man to think, shows him what he should think about, and teaches him where to look for the stuff he wants. This, I take it, is the purpose of a College training and the mark of a man who is educated. "To talk in public," wrote Samuel Johnson, "to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and to answer inquiries, this is the business of a scholar," and if this be not the whole, it is a large part of the business of a minister for which his years in College ought to fit him.

In spite of practical difficulties, the need remains for additional training after the College course is completed. The liaison between Regent's Park, Oxford, and the other Colleges now provides this for graduates, and I can testify to the value of those years when education is set against a wider background than is possible at our other Colleges. But it is a different kind of training of which I am thinking. There was an arrangement in my time between Bristol College and the church at Queen's Road, Coventry, whereby a student in his third year spent a term or so as a kind of "curate" to the minister. I would like to see



training centres established at three or four of our churches of different types and in different localities. If men could live for a time in the inner life of the Church, attend its deacons' meetings, accompany the minister on his varied duties, and continue their reading, they would be better equipped for the crucial years of their first pastorate. As a fourth year student I might have rejected the idea that I was not yet fit for my job, but I know now that I was unfit. There is nothing original in this suggestion, and the usual reply is that a man can learn the details of his calling in his initial pastorate. But is that quite fair to the man or the churches?

When I reflect upon the years spent in Bristol and Oxford I am conscious that our life was altogether too narrow in its contacts and interests. It was specialised college training and not a university education. I do not complain that College life is sheltered; it needs to be so if a man is to study successfully, but we rubbed shoulders and discussed God, man, and eternity only with other theologs, almost all Baptists. We rarely even played football except against other theological students. We did not make contact with men whose ambitions and hopes were altogether alien to our own. Discussing this point with a solicitor friend of mine, he said: "Can you imagine anything more ghastly than a college where you meet only engineers?" A technical college, whether it be for engineers or parsons, does confine the spirit. It would have been of incalculable value if I had shared a study with a man training for a degree in science, and at meals sat next to one who was taking history. For at least a part of their course theological students should live in the University halls of residence and share the wide, corporate life of the whole body of students. If, as Baxter wrote of George Herbert, our business in the world "is most with God," it is also imperative that, like our Master, we should know what is in man.

R. C. WALTON.

### THE CHURCH—AN ENQUIRY.

IT is becoming increasingly clear that the Church is not going to pass through the present conflict unscathed. It cannot hope to be the same as it was; nor would it be worthy of its high destiny if it were unaffected by the experiences of men at so creative a time.

Unfortunately our evaluation of the place and purpose of the Church in the modern situation is impoverished by our in-

adequate appreciation of the nature of the Church itself. We cannot remind ourselves too frequently that the Church is an Act of God. It is an extension in terms of Community of that which was wrought by God in the personal and individual terms of Jesus, His Christ. To dissociate the Church from the activity of God so plainly manifested in the series of events known to Christian experience as the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, makes any explanation of the Church impossible. Moreover, it is this redemptive character of the Church which should govern our relationship with it. Too often we regard the Church as a society of men and women brought together by a common theological outlook or common preference for a certain ecclesiastical form. These factors may and do bring people together, but not for these reasons do they form a Church. God alone creates the Church, and it is this which distinguishes the Church from every other society. No other community is committed to a belief in the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, for no other society finds it imperative to affirm that the God who called it into existence ever abides within it, a sure and certain guarantee that no evil shall destroy it. "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against her."

When first the Church stepped forth into history it had two outstanding features—a profound spiritual vision and economic realism. It was convinced that God had vindicated His Christ, and in the light of this astounding truth concerning God's creative work it set out to build a new Community. In its attempt to bring this society into being the Church showed economic realism of a truly startling character, and had the experiment succeeded it would have vindicated her beyond anything she has attempted since. But the experiment failed; and it failed on a matter of honesty. It was this failure no doubt which made the stress on redeemed character appear more vital than any reconstructed economic arrangement, but the neglect of the latter has vitiated the value of the former. It is no good expecting the redeemed to live creatively anywhere except in the redeemed Community; they will not be at home anywhere else. It is this which gives saints their revolutionary character, and makes the Church a menace to every existing order which divorces the spiritual destiny of man from economic justice.

This seems to be an issue to which the Church might give some serious consideration. The most formidable assault made by any group on the economic injustices of the world has been

made by Russia. It is marked by economic realism of an aggressive type, but it is completely lacking in spiritual appreciation of the moral issues involved. Because of the radical nature of its economic plan it is making a strong appeal to many minds, and this appeal is encouraged by what is commonly regarded as the silence of the Church. There is no need for the Church to be silent on the issue, for the whole message of the Church is social through and through. It speaks of a prodigal coming home, and a sheep being brought to the fold. In neither case is the act of restoration complete until the harmony of the wider social sphere is assured. "This son of yours" must become "your brother" before the redemption of the prodigal is fully consummated. The Church alone knows that "give me" leads inevitably to the far country; only "give us" can lead to the Kingdom of God. It is significant that both these petitions had to do with material things, evidence, especially in the Lord's Prayer, of the concern of the Church for the material welfare of men. In a world which God has created there is no moral justification for poverty, and the abolition of it is far more the concern of men who have seen the face of God in Jesus Christ than many of the matters on which so much valuable time is wasted. The basic reason for this lies in the faith of the Church that it exists to continue the redemptive work of Christ, and such redemption must include all the relationships of man. No man lives in a vacuum; no man sins in a vacuum, as we are learning at very bitter cost; and no man is saved in a vacuum. There is a solidarity about human life which we may wish to ignore in many ways, but our grim and desperate days are driving home the truth relentlessly. The world has become a neighbourhood; if men are to survive they must master the technique of living together. This moral mastery can be theirs, as it was the possession of many early Christians, when men realise that being a neighbour means attending to human need wherever it presents itself, thus giving the lie to the assumption that religion is that which allows a man to pass by on the other side.

EMLYN DAVIES.

### OF INTEREST TO YOU.

*Our Annual Meeting.* Attendance good—considering the "blitz." Spirit excellent. Reports encouraging, even the Treasurer being semi-satisfied. Addresses by Barrett and Middlebrook informative and helpful, and a great word from Ingli James at the close. Read his article and judge for your-



self. So, away to the Missionary Sermon, with another meeting ended.

*Membership.* We report with satisfaction an accession of about sixty new members, which seems to indicate increasing interest in the Fellowship. Amongst these are several retired missionaries. We trust that the B.M.F. will become a real link between these brethren and their comrades in the Field.

*Thanks, Dunnico.* In a letter to our Treasurer Sir Herbert Dunnico, in sending ten shillings, requested the balance be applied to the payment of subscriptions for some brethren who might find difficulty in sparing the money for membership. The Secretary wrote to thank our generous brother, and in reply he very kindly increased the offer. None of us can really afford the half-crown, but some less than others, and we are sincerely grateful to Sir Herbert.

*Ministerial.* F. G. Watts had a great meeting to celebrate his ministerial jubilee. He has been greatly blessed in his four pastorates and fully deserved the kindness and appreciation evident at the jubilee meeting.

W. F. Bridge has "come of age" at Rickmansworth, following fourteen years at Sarratt. His service as Herts' County Secretary constitutes a record. He is well worthy of the affectionate greetings from Church and County voiced at his anniversary meeting. The Fellowship joins in loving congratulations to both these men. Our denomination owes much to ministries such as these.

*The Pastorate.* Several of our members have recently accepted new pastorates. They include :—R. Brunskill, Pinner; Tooke, Waterlooville; W. H. Jones (Bridgend), Llandrindod; J. J. Brown, Erith; A. Baldwin, Burton-on-Trent; the good wishes of the Fellowship go with them to their new spheres of labour. G. C. Matthews and G. N. Graham have left our denomination for the Church of England. We regret their going, and we wish them well.

*Indisposed.* F. C. Filewood and W. W. Bottoms have been seriously ill. We remember them in our prayers and sincerely hope to hear news of progress towards recovery. We regret, too, that our friend and colleague W. Charles Johnson has had to take an enforced rest owing to slight eye trouble. We trust he will speedily be restored.

*Eighty.* Dr. Whitley is now between eighty and ninety years of age, having attained his eightieth birthday a few weeks ago. We owe much to our Baptist historian and thank God for

him. Having enriched us by his scholarly studies of past centuries, we very much hope to see him complete a century on his own account.

*Hitler.* We have heard with deep concern of many more members whose homes and churches have been bombed. In most cases personal letters have been sent, but we would here repeat our assurance of affectionate sympathy with them in their great trial. Let us think of these friends at the Sunday morning Watch.

*Called Home.* Our esteemed brother P. F. Boyd passed away a few weeks ago. For forty years he maintained a quiet, effective ministry and was greatly esteemed for his character and work's sake.

*Conferences.*—Lancashire ministers held a successful Conference recently at Grange-over-Sands. An attendance of thirty-five was presided over by Humphrey Chalmers. Professor J. R. Coates, of Selly Oak, was the guest Lecturer, whose subject was "The Kingdom of God before and after Christ." His elaboration of the characteristics of the true prophet will not soon be forgotten, nor his great exposition of Isaiah and the Johannine Epistles. In addition to the five sessions devoted to this study, papers were contributed by E. B. Greening and J. H. Malins Johnson. Those privileged to be present returned to their work intellectually and spiritually refreshed by a memorable series of lectures and discussions and a fellowship which grew finer at every session. We are glad to receive this account and, as the real aim of our B.M.F. is to encourage such gatherings, we hope that many similar conferences will be arranged—war notwithstanding.

*Our Magazine.* We appreciate the loyal help of our contributors—all of whom render voluntary service. Readers will agree that, for once, we are justified in publishing verse. They will unite with us in congratulating the writer. Minor muses, however, will please note that usually the only poetry appearing in our columns is that which is contained in the prose of the various articles.

*Local Fraternal.* The work of compiling a list of Baptist Fraternal is proceeding, and at present we know of about thirty. The object in view is to establish vital contact between all local Fraternal and the B.M.F. The help of our members in this matter will be appreciated.

*The Library.* We are glad to record that our library has recently received a valuable gift of books from the Dr. Williams's

Trust through its Secretary, Rev. Joseph Worthington. This is not the first time that we have received help from this source: we are most grateful to the Trustees. The Managers of the Particular Baptist Fund have voted another generous donation which will make possible a further welcome increase in up-to-date books for circulation amongst our Groups.

Library members may be interested to know that William Brown's "Psychology and Psychotherapy" is available for any Group who would like to have it. It has been felt that this is a book for specialised study and that it should not be included in any of the boxes in the ordinary way. Applications should be made to the Librarian.

The Librarian is sorry if, through miscarriage of parcel posts—not unlikely in these days—one or two Groups have not received their boxes. Enquiries are being instituted to retrieve missing boxes where possible. It is suggested that when forwarding boxes in July, Groups should secure a certificate of posting and keep it against similar emergencies.

H. M. Angus also reports that new Groups are being formed, and we are pleased to know that in the service thus rendered one of the objects of our Fellowship is being accomplished.

*Regent's Park College.* Widespread interest attaches to the appointment as Principal of R.P.C. of the Rev. R. L. Child, B.D., B.Litt. Our fellow members unite to congratulate Robert Child on this appointment and the College on securing the services of one of her most distinguished sons. A preacher and scholar, a man gifted with powers of leadership, and withal of a brotherly and sympathetic nature, he will prove a power for good in the lives of generations of students, and will worthily maintain the tradition of his *alma mater*. The new Principal will enter on his duties next year.

To Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson we extend our thanks for his great services and pray that in his retirement he may be able to lay our denomination and the churches generally under a further debt of obligation.

*Change of Address.*

Rev. W. H. Pratt,  
Donnington,  
17, Rickmansworth Road,  
Watford.

Will members whose subscriptions are in arrears kindly send our treasurer a P.O. without delay? Thank you. S.G.M.



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